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RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0092
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RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Carl Siebentritt for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

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[1](#)1. (C) Turkish media is reporting that the frigate "Gaziantep" will depart for UNIFIL duty on October 10 and the Turkish land component will arrive in Lebanon October 20. Turkish General Staff (TGS) J-3 Operations Chief MG Serdar Kocak confirmed to us October 4 that Turkish naval and ground units will deploy to Lebanon in mid-October, without giving a precise date. According to Kocak, the UN has informed Turkey it will not need the two corvettes Turkey had offered but will take the frigate. Turkey will deploy a military construction engineering company, which will include some civilian specialists, to Lebanon under UNIFIL's operational control. That unit will have the ability to defend itself, Kocak said, leaving unclear whether additional force protection elements will be deployed with it. Other TGS officials have confirmed media reports that a 90-man special forces unit will deploy as part of the engineering company.

[1](#)2. (C) When asked, Kocak stated that the Turkish ground component will operate under specific caveats. The engineering unit will not engage in mine-clearing or disposal of unexploded ordnance. It will also not engage in any activity that could bring it in conflict with armed elements on either side, particularly disarmament of Hizbollah forces. The engineering unit will have as its first priority direct mobility support to UNIFIL units and, secondarily, will undertake humanitarian or civilian reconstruction tasks. Kocak attributed the limitations on the mission to the parliamentary resolution governing this deployment passed on September 5 (ref a).

[1](#)3. (C) Turkey has also promised to provide air and sea transport for "allied and friendly" countries on a case-by-case basis. According to Kocak, Turkey may provide assistance to NATO and EU contributors to UNIFIL, with the exception of Cyprus.

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